

Statement to House Sub-Committee on Immigration and Nationality, of Committee on the Judiciary, at hearing on Wednesday, September 28, 1966, presented by C. Rodney Smith, Vice-President of Free Europe, Inc., and Director of Radio Free Europe, 1961-1966.

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Mr. Chairman and Committee members, may I first thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today on the matter of H. R. 14545. This proposed bill to permit naturalization for certain employees of United States organizations engaged in disseminating information which significantly promotes United States interests abroad deals with a subject with which I have had a unique opportunity to become closely familiar over the past six years.

I am here today in my capacity as a Vice President of Free Europe, Inc., a position I have held since May of 1960. I am representing here today the President of Free Europe, Mr. John Richardson, Jr., and the Free Europe Board of Directors, the Chairman of which is ex-Ambassador John Hughes. Other members of the Free Europe Board of Directors include ex-Ambassadors Robert D. Murphy, Livingston T. Merchant and Ernest A. Gross, the Honorable Roswell L. Gilpatric and Frank Pace, Jr., Crawford H. Greenewalt, Michael L. Haider, Roy E. Larsen, Donald H. McGannon and William B. Murphy. To identify myself, I spent 35 years in the regular Army, retired as a Major General in 1957, became a Vice President in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, and three years later joined the Free Europe organization.

As Director of Radio Free Europe for five and one-half years, I came to know very well the exiles from East Europe who serve on the RFE staff as broadcasters, writers, editors, newsmen, researchers, linguists, actors, announcers and executives. These people constitute a unique group of highly talented and highly dedicated people who are serving the causes of freedom and democracy, and the interests of the United States, in a most extraordinary way. I am honored to have the opportunity today to tell you something about the caliber of these men and women, one hundred and nine of whom would be the beneficiaries of H.R. 14545.

These exile employees of Radio Free Europe are anti-communist exiles from countries now under communist rule. They left their countries, many barely escaping with their lives, because they had stood against the communists who took over their countries and because they stood for freedom of and in their countries. Many of these people held positions of prominence and stature in their countries. All are well educated, talented and cultured. Among them are a former ambassador and other diplomats, parliamentarians, men who held important positions in government and industry, lawyers and other professional people, economists, writers, editors, and business men. They are people of proven ability who have made and are continuing to make a notable contribution to society.

These men and women wish to become American citizens. At some time in the past, after leaving their homeland, they came to the United States and took first steps to establish residence. A number lived here for some time. Employment with RFE gave them an opportunity to

enlist in the cause for freedom of their fellow countrymen behind the Iron Curtain. Radio Free Europe asked them to work in Munich, Germany where the bulk of the RFE operation is carried on. In accepting employment by RFE at Munich they had to forgo, or at least postpone, their opportunity to remain in the United States long enough to become U.S. citizens. They took out re-entry permit papers which are kept alive by RFE returning the individuals to the United States for a few days every two years.

As the years went by the delay in their being able to establish U.S. residence requirements which would enable them to become U.S. citizens has now lasted up to and beyond fifteen years, in some cases sixteen years. These employees of this American institution are staying and working abroad because of the requirements of their U.S. employers. They remain on this work because they believe in it, and are dedicated to the cause of freedom it represents. The demands of their employment abroad may keep them waiting many more years for their citizenship unless relieved by remedial legislation. Meanwhile, they remain stateless, and what is most heart-breaking, their children remain stateless, deprived of opportunities which would be opened to them by U.S. citizenship. Their children are especially handicapped by lack of U.S. citizenship in their desire to come to America to complete their higher education. Without U.S. citizenship, very limited opportunities are open to them for scholarships, for financial and other assistance, for jobs to help work their way through college, for initial acceptance in colleges they desire to enter. Brilliant children of talented parents who graduate from the Munich American High School with outstanding records are faced with many difficulties in trying to go on to get

college educations in the U.S.

These exiles and their children live in an atmosphere that is strongly American. They work under American management and supervision. They broadcast in their native languages, but the framework in which their work is done, their guidance and control, is American and in the English language. Their children attend American schools in Munich and speak unaccented, colloquial English, or "American-ese" if you will, and their parents are proud of it. These people want very strongly to become American citizens, and they would fit quickly and smoothly into any American community.

I would like to cite a few examples of the kind of person who would be enabled by this bill to become a U. S. citizen.

Istvan Bede, RFE's Director of Hungarian Broadcasting, was the first Hungarian Ambassador to Great Britain immediately after World War II. He resigned in 1948 in protest against Hungary's subversion into a satellite of the Soviet Union. Earlier in his diplomatic career Mr. Bede had been head of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry's Press Department. He also served in important assignments in the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry. He is a superbly well educated and widely read man, a poised and polished public speaker. His wife is a daughter of an Ambassador, a lovely and cultured woman. They, like their associates in RFE, will make very desirable American citizens.

Jan Nowak, Director of RFE's Polish Broadcasting, was a top leader in the Polish resistance movement during World War II. He parachuted into Poland from England on the eve of the 1944 Warsaw uprising against the

German Army and during the fighting broadcast over the insurgents' radio station. He returned to England with the first eye witness account of the uprising. After the war he became a member of the British Broadcasting Corporation and came to RFE from the BBC. He is a brilliant man and a dynamic leader, just the kind of man you would want to have as a U.S. citizen.

Preda Bunescu, Associate Director of Rumanian Broadcasting, was educated as a lawyer. After leaving Rumania when that country was overtaken by communism, he first worked in Paris for the Credit Lyonnais Bank. He also did writing and studied economics at the University of Strasbourg. Like so many of his colleagues at RFE he would fit perfectly into American life and contribute materially to it.

Tadeusz Nowakowski is a well known Polish writer, author of several excellent books. One of his "best-sellers" received a leading German literary award a few years ago. He is a brilliant and accomplished writer on the political and cultural scene.

Laslo Feketekuty, Chief of RFE's Hungarian News Desk, was Assistant Professor in Government at the University of Budapest. He is a solid citizen with an attractive family, the kind of people anyone would like to have living next door.

I could go on with many more examples, but let me mention only one more. Kazimierz Wierzbianski, Chief of RFE's Polish News Desk, is a good example of how employment with RFE in Munich has prevented an individual for many years from obtaining the U.S. citizenship he would otherwise have attained. Mr. Wierzbianski was admitted to the United States in 1952 as a quota immigrant, joined RFE, was asked to go to Munich, and has

remained there since in a key position. Throughout the intervening years, he has had to return to the U.S. every two years to renew and maintain his re-entry permit. His brother who came to the United States at the same time and remained here has long since become a U.S. citizen.

These exiles who are working in RFE are perhaps the best-proven anti-communists anywhere. Many were imprisoned by communist governments; many escaped from their countries at great personal risk. They are called traitors by the communist regimes in their home countries. Their return would for some mean rigged show trials and probable death sentences. They have remained stateless through all these years that they aspire to U.S. citizenship.

Citizenship and holding a U.S. passport would have tremendous morale value to these deserving people, and would have important operational value to the RFE organization. Anyone who has traveled or lived abroad knows the vital importance of a passport. Without it one is without recognized status. The U.S. re-entry permit is not in itself a travel document. Its acceptance at national borders in lieu of a passport is not certain. RFE has many needs for its employees to travel across international borders, as for example to cover important events in Rome, Paris, Vienna, Brussels. The holder of a U.S. passport can, of course, make such trips without hindrance. For stateless people there is always the chance of delay at borders, or even exclusion.

Citizenship achieved under the provisions of the proposed bill would make it more likely that these key exile employees will stay with RFE.

As the years pass by and they grow older, and as their children reach high

school and college age, they become more and more anxious to acquire citizenship, particularly for the sake of their families. In the past year one of our best exile political writers and broadcasters finally, after much soul searching and with great reluctance, resigned to go to London where he could be assured of continuing employment in anti-communist political work and at the same time acquire citizenship. He wanted to stay at RFE, but family pressures finally became too great.

The exile employees of RFE who would be able to achieve U.S. citizenship under this proposed bill are devoted to America. They are grateful for the opportunity America has given them to work at RFE for the improvement of the hard lot of their fellow countrymen who are under communist domination. RFE's exiles are highly motivated people, dedicated to the cause of their <sup>countrymen's</sup> eventual freedom from communism. They want to continue this work to which they are so dedicated. They also want to become U.S. citizens. Above all else they want their children, whom they have raised as Americans in an American-oriented atmosphere, to become U.S. citizens. They do not want to have to leave RFE to become U.S. citizens, and only if they felt that they were forced to move to America in order to fulfill residence requirements, would they leave RFE. Within the next few years, however, many may feel it necessary for the sake of their families, to leave RFE and go to the U.S. unless some way is found for them to count the years spent at RFE in meeting residence requirements. Their leaving RFE would be a tremendous and irreparable loss to RFE's effectiveness, for these people represent a large share of the very heart of RFE's operation.

I earnestly hope, and urge, that you may be able to give favorable consideration to this proposed bill. Its passage would be the finest single action that could be taken to recognize the dearest wish of the exiles affected by it, which is to become U.S. citizens and most especially to facilitate their children becoming U.S. citizens.

Thank you again for the honor and privilege of having this opportunity to appear before you today. I will be pleased to try to answer any questions you may have.